

A high-level monthly briefing on operations and activities at the Department of Energy's Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory – Home of Science and Engineering Solutions. Work at the lab supports the Department's business lines of environmental quality, energy resources, national security and science.

■ ENERGY RESOURCES – INEEL Researchers Support Bioenergy Conference

Technology under development at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory was featured as part of the 10th Biennial Bioenergy Conference – Bioenergy for the Environment – Sept. 22-26 in Boise. INEEL scientists participated in several technical sessions focusing on collaborative research and development efforts in bioenergy. One of the highlights of the conference was the poster presentations. Three INEEL-related posters – Selective Harvest of Higher Value Wheat Straw Components, Pretreating Herbaceous Biomass for Improved Gasification and Combustion, and Developing Optimum Fertilization Strategies for Simultaneous Production of Grain and Straw – were featured during the five-day event.

■ ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Broadly Based Cleanup Progress Noted

Significant progress was made in fiscal year 2002 in reducing risk to the environment and accelerating cleanup of the INEEL. Notably, the 3,100 cubic meter project passed the 90 percent completion point, with more than 2,800 cubic meters of transuranic waste shipped out of state so far. Expectations are that the project will finish well ahead of its Dec. 31, 2002 deadline. Separately, the fourth and fifth pillar and panel-vaulted tanks of liquid sodium-bearing waste were emptied 18 months ahead of schedule, bringing the total of tanks emptied to six. Employees successfully emptied the Mixed Waste Storage Facility at the Waste Reduction Operations Complex in September. The waste stored in this building was shipped off-site for treatment and disposal. Finally, the INEEL completed the removal of spent nuclear fuel stored in the canal at the Material Test Reactor at the Test Reactor Area, and began construction ahead of schedule on the Glovebox Excavator Method project at the Radioactive Waste Management Complex.

■ NATIONAL SECURITY – INEEL Demonstrates Technologies

INEEL National Security researchers this month demonstrated Lab-developed equipment during a training exercise for the 44th Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team. The exercise – conducted at Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah – incorporated INEEL's mobile command post trailer; a compact, waterproof HAZMAT wireless camera system; a compact pan, tilt and zoom camera system; and a wireless security camera. The exercise participants used the air-conditioned INEEL trailer system as the Incident Command Center for the exercise. All the camera systems fed live video into the trailer and greatly enhanced the ability of the Incident Commander to monitor site activities. The exercise provided an excellent opportunity to show the Army National Guard Civil Support Team the INEEL's field-proven suite of technologies for assessing and responding to incidents involving weapons of mass destruction.

■ SCIENCE – Subsurface Science Symposium in the Works

The second annual Subsurface Science Symposium is scheduled Oct. 13-16 at the Doubletree Hotel Riverside in Boise. The symposium is organized by the Inland Northwest Research Alliance and the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory as a way to share ideas and data on subsurface science. Areas of focus during the symposium include geophysics, hydrology, modeling, scaling, bioremediation, geochemistry, technology transfer, mass transport, remediation science and technology, the INRA Subsurface Science Research Institute, and environmental policy and management.

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